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XIV.—*Notes on some little-known Birds of the new Colony of the Fiji Islands.* By EDGAR L. LAYARD, C.M.G., F.Z.S., Administrator of the Government.

THE arrival of the Governor, the Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon, to assume the direction of the affairs of this infant colony, and the necessity of some relaxation from the strain and worry of the previous eighteen months, which had seriously affected my health, afforded me reasons for seizing an opportunity to visit the beautiful and fertile island of Taviuni, the third largest of the Fiji archipelago, and one from which some of our most interesting birds have been procured.

As Mr. Liardet had brought from Taviuni to Levuka some indifferent specimens, which he submitted to my inspection, and amongst which I instantly detected several new species, I despatched my son, Mr. Leopold Layard, in April last to procure better skins. This he accomplished as regards all those species hitherto obtained, save one; and he also brought a report which determined me to go thither myself and see this island and its treasures with my own eyes.

On the 14th of July I started for Ngila, the hospitable residence of James Mason, Esq., which became my fixed abode

for six weeks; and in the woods at the back of his plantation the accompanying observations were made. My son at the time was up the Rewa river, among the "Kai-tholos," or mountaineers, in the centre of Viti Levu, on a collecting expedition; but on receiving my summons, despatched by a special messenger, he hurried down and joined me at Ngila; and we worked together.

The climate was delightful, the temperature being often as low as 62° Fahr. at night and in the morning, and ordinarily about 76° or 78° by day. A blanket and counterpane were usually acceptable; and we had no mosquitoes.

The forest about here rises from the back of the plantation in a gradual slope to an altitude of 800 or 1000 feet above the level of the sea. The lower portion has evidently at some time been felled and cultivated, but is now covered with a second growth of timber. This, though of fair size, contained little to interest us—an occasional *Rhipidura* or *Monarcha*, and now and then a stray "Orange Dove," in the young or green plumage. As we ascended the range the timber became finer, and resounded with the call of my new *Pachycephala torquata*, the new *Myiolestes macrorhynchus* put in an appearance, young "Orange Doves" became more plentiful; and on the flowering trees *Ptilotis carunculata* and the lovely little Parrot which I have named *Trichoglossus aureicinctus* hung pendent from the branches of the white blossoms, and chased each other with shrill screams or loud flute-like pipings. Then we gained the highest summits; and from among the lofty trees that clothed them came the loud booming "bark" of the large fruit-eating "Barking Pigeon" (*Carpophaga latrans*) and the harsh screams of the red-and-green Parrot.

As we hunted about, an odd chuckling sound, like a coachman starting his horses, was heard; and "Pretty" (the Laconi boy), knowing what we wanted, excitedly whispered "Manu-manu dum-dum," which is, being interpreted, "the red bird."

We dived into the "bush" after the boy, who peered up into the green leaves; suddenly he stopped, beckoned excitedly, whispering "Manu-manu dum-dum, Manu-manu, dum-dum" in a rapid voice, and pointed upwards. We gazed in

vain, till what we had taken for the gorgeous tints of a dying leaf, suddenly sprang to another bough. The "coachman" tried to start his horses again; and at every "chuck" the "gorgeous orange" jerked up and down in the oddest manner. It was *Chrysæna victor* of Gould, in all his glory! which in a few moments fell like an orange-and-gold ball headlong to the ground.

Brethren of the B. O. U. (I know you can rejoice with me over the acquisition of a rare bird of beautiful colours and strange appearance), picture to yourselves our delight as we handled the brilliant Orangebird, with the sun-light gleaming through its golden wings, and lighting up the emerald-green of its bill and feet, and of the cere round the yellow-buff eye, now closing, alas! in death.

We "lifted [him] up tenderly," stroked the smooth feathers of the strangely-coloured head, and recalled the moment when Mr. Gould exhibited the first specimen in the rooms of the Zoological Society. How little did I dream that I should be the first, perhaps the only one, of those present who gazed on the beautiful bird, to shoot it in its native haunts. We think of friends far away, till "Pretty" recalls us to Taviuni and the woods with a tug at the sleeve, and the magic word "Manu-manu;" and there, within easy range, with drooping wings and uplifted tail, swinging in the loop of a pendent liana, a jet-black bird, that at once reminded us of the Indian Robin (*Thamnobia fulicata*), jerked itself from side to side, while it progressed by short leaps up the liana. As I thrust a cartridge into the breech of my gun, the bird darted off through the trees, exposing to my astonished gaze the exquisite white satin patch that adorns the tail of *Lamprolia victoriae*!

Before my trip was over, many a sable beauty lay in my hand; and probably my first acquaintance was one of them, as we found them, though distributed, pretty local, and attached to certain spots. My son and I usually brought home a row of birds, numbering from sixteen to twenty or more, pendent from a long stick, carefully carried by "Pretty," and shaded from the sun or rain by a long banana-leaf. After an

early dinner we then set to work, took out all the bodies of the birds we had shot, and stowed the skins in close-fitting tin boxes, with damp rags at the bottom. This kept them pliable; and a few drops of carbolic acid helped to retain them sweet. A few were usually finished off that day, and the remainder on the morrow; so we had alternate days fag in the forest and rest after. At night we refilled cartridges and wrote labels. This plan of working we found very advantageous; and I give it for the benefit of some of the young readers of 'The Ibis.'

Having described our country, I now proceed to particularize our birds; and the first I shot on entering the forest shall have precedence.

ZOSTEROPS EXPLORATOR, Layard, P. Z. S. 1875, p. 29.

I formerly described this species from memory, from a specimen obtained by the 'Challenger' exploring expedition, and was very glad to meet with it again, and thus be enabled to describe it more in detail.

Male. Upper surface of back, head, rump, and sides of chest greenish yellow; forehead, and line reaching to the eye, chin, throat, chest, and under tail-coverts yellow; belly whitish, tinged with yellow; flanks pale brown; circle of feathers round the eyelid well developed and white; under the eye a small black patch; wing- and tail-feathers pale black, edged externally with yellow; inside of wing white; shoulder tinted with yellow; bill livid dark blue, tip black, base of lower mandible white; legs and feet blue; iris brown. Length 4", wing 2" 6"', tail 1" 6"', tarsi 8"', bill 8"'.

The female resembles the male, but is slightly less brightly coloured.

This species differs considerably from our other *Zosterops* (*Z. flaviceps*, Peale) in having none of the blue (ashy) tints so very noticeable in that species. It approaches apparently most closely to *Z. flavifrons*, Gmel., from which it differs in the brown flanks and the centre of the belly being white.

It ranges in the forest in small parties of ten or more individuals, and, I am informed by the planters, often visits their cotton-fields, to devour the minute insects that infest the

cotton-buds. It utters a shrill note, and is a restless, active, prying little bird, ever on the move, examining flowers, leaves, and branches, and everywhere gleaning an abundant harvest.

TRICHOGLISSUS AUREICINCTUS, Layard, Ann. & Mag. N. H. 1875, xvi. p. 344.

In April last my son reported the existence of a small Parrot, in size about that of the Shell Parrakeet of Australia, green, with a red neck and throat, flying in considerable numbers in company (but not mingling) with the "Kulu" (*Lorius solitarius*, Lath.). As he did not find the tree on which they were then feeding, he did not succeed in securing a specimen. In June or July subsequently, two gentlemen and my late servant Pearce, collecting in Viti Levu, obtained it.

Our bird is known to the natives of Fiji under the name of "Kula-wai," and to the Laconi boys by that of "Vuni-as."

It frequents a tree in the forests of Taviuni bearing a white flower with filamentous pistils, not unlike that of the "Jambo" of India (*Eugenia jambos*). It was often seen in parties of six or eight, and never less than a pair together, creeping about the branches and bunches of flowers with great rapidity, hanging head downwards, or in any position so that it could bite away portions of the flower to get at its favourite morsel, or chasing the noisy *Ptilotis carunculata* that attempted to share with it the flowery sweets.

The female differs very slightly, if at all, from the male; but the young birds, instead of wearing the gorgeous red breeches of the adults, have dull purple thighs, and the deep pink of the throat and other tints are less vivid.

PLATYCERCUS TAVIUNENSIS, sp. nov.

On officially visiting Taviuni in the early part of 1874, a Parrot was obtained alive by some of the men of H.M.S. 'Pearl,' which I at once saw presented some marked differences from the birds I had previously seen from Viti Levu. I therefore directed my son to procure, if possible, specimens for comparison. Unfortunately, the wet weather which prevailed during his April trip prevented his obtaining more than a single female. This bird, however, convinced me

that the Taviuni race, if not specifically distinct, possessed some marked characters; and I made the accompanying memorandum respecting it, determining to lose no opportunity of seeing more of the species:—

“There is a marked difference between the red-breasted Parrots found in Taviuni and on the islands of the western portion of the group. The Taviuni bird is considerably smaller, to begin with.”

A male shot by my son measures, length 14", wing 7" 6", tail 7" 8" (not fully grown?), tarsi 10", centre toe (without nail) 1" 1", bill 1"; a male shot on the Rewa measures, length 16" 6", tail 9" 6" (not fully grown), wing 9" 6", tarsi 11", centre toe (without nail) 1" 3", bill 1" $2\frac{3}{4}$ "; form less robust; the whole coloration is darker, but especially the crimson, which, in the Taviuni bird, is turned into a deep maroon, much the darkest on the forehead and lores. The Taviuni bird also wants the blue patch at the back of the neck.

Just before my departure from Taviuni, a kind friend (Mr. Tempest, of Ndreketti), who had been collecting for me in Vanua Levu, brought me a small lot of birds, among which were a splendid pair of Parrots. To my astonishment the coloration was that of the Taviuni bird, *but with the addition of a blue nuchal collar*, but not so well defined as in the Viti-Levu birds, but still marked enough, and possessed by both sexes. In size it resembles the Viti-Levu bird, the male being a noble specimen, 17" long.

This made me more anxious than ever for a fine series of Taviuni birds; and we consequently killed a lot of them, old and young of both sexes; but not one exhibited the least trace of the *blue nuchal collar*, while all were of the same deep chocolate-crimson, or maroon; moreover they all, especially the young, showed traces of dark green on the breast, body, and legs, chiefly on the latter, where in some specimens it is much developed, giving the thighs a scaly appearance. This green occupies the entire base of each feather. In some specimens the rump appears scaly with the deep maroon; this is never seen in the Viti-Levu race. Both sexes are smaller than the Viti-Levu race. But a fresh surprise awaited us. On our way down from Taviuni we anchored some hours at

Koro, an island midway between Ovalau and Taviuni, and, rambling on shore, we came across some Parrots.

We shot three birds; and on examining them our astonishment was not a little increased to find that two of them exhibited the faintest trace of the *blue nuchal collar*! while all have a large *red broken maroon* bar across the rump. Here, then, we have four distinct races in these islands (and, as I shall presently show, this is not a solitary instance):—first, the bright crimson-bellied race, with blue collar, of Viti Levu, extending, I think, to Kandavu*; second, the Mathuata bird (Bua and Ndreketti), on the other large island of Vanua Levu, maroon-bellied, with broadish blue nuchal collar†; third, the Koro bird, maroon-bellied, with the faintest trace of the blue collar‡; and, fourth, the Taviuni race (*P. taviunensis*, mihi), maroon-coloured, and without a trace of the blue collar.

In habits the races are similar. They frequent the forest, feeding on various fruits and berries as they come into season, and making descents on the planters' Indian-corn crops, where their depredations are very serious. They are very shy and wary, planting sentinels, who, with harsh cries, warn the flock of approaching danger, when off they all troop to the forest, and hide silently in the dense crowns of the broadest-leaved trees. If they find themselves discovered, they utter loud cries, swaying themselves to and fro on their perches, and holding themselves ready for flight in a moment. I have dodged them by appearing to walk past, and then, after changing my No. 10 cartridge for No. 7, crept back and dropped my quarry, who had meanwhile resumed his feeding, thinking that all was secure.

A gentleman at Ngila assured me that he had obtained three young ones from the same nest. They are capable of being tamed to any extent; and a lady on the Rewa has several pairs of these and *P. personatus* that fly about the woods

* [This is *P. splendens* (Peale). Examples from both islands are in Lord Walden's collection.—ED.]

† [This is probably *P. tabuensis*; but Mr. Layard's specimens have not yet reached this country.—ED.]

‡ [This appears to be *P. hysginus* (Forster); but Mr. Layard's specimens have not yet arrived.—ED.]

unrestrained, returning to roost at night in their cages. When she walks out they fly to her and perch on her head or shoulder; and the last sight I had of my fair friend was to see her standing, on the high banks overlooking the river where her house is situated, with a pair of *P. personatus* on one shoulder, and a pair of *P. splendens* on the other.

ASTUR CRUENTUS, Gould.

We saw this Hawk breeding freely in the forest. It generally selects a banyan-tree (*Ficus*), and places its nest, a rough structure of sticks, on a branch so thin as not to be able to bear the weight of a man. We had to spoon the eggs out, by tying a bag, kept open by a wire ring, to the end of a long stick.

STRIX DELICATULA, Gould.

We took five eggs of the Australian White Owl from a banyan-tree. They were laid in a depression (without any nest) at the junction of four large branches. They are pure white. Axis 1" 9", diam. 1" 3".

EUDYNAMIS TAITIENSIS (Sparrm.).

A specimen of this bird, here very scarce, was shot a few months ago near Levuka.

CUCULUS SIMUS, Peale.

Seems to be a constant resident in the group; I have it from Taviuni, Mathuata, the Rewa, &c.

LALAGE TERAT (Bodd.).

I cannot help thinking that our *Lalage* is wrongly identified with *Lalage terat* (Bodd.); but which of the numerous synonyms quoted by Drs. Finsch and Hartlaub will apply to it, I have no means of judging. I have received or shot specimens from all parts of the group, but not one in any plumage save that which is said to be the young stage. This it wears all the year round; and the natives everywhere declare that it breeds in this state; but I have never yet succeeded in obtaining a nest.

MONARCHA LESSONI, Hombr.

This species was common in the forest at all altitudes. A nest, said to be of this bird, was brought to me (23rd July,

1875), composed entirely of rootlets, and thickly covered with the yellow egg-bags of a common large spider. Diam. outside 2" 8^{'''}, inside 1" 9^{'''}; depth outside 3" 6^{'''}, inside 1" 9^{'''}. It contained two eggs, hard-set; ground-colour white, speckled, in the shape of a ring at the obtuse end, with small pink spots. Axis 10^{'''}, diam. 7^{'''}.

MYIOLESTES MACRORHYNCHUS, sp. nov.

This species, originally named by me from a specimen brought in a miserable condition by Mr. Liardet from Ta-viuni, replaces *M. vitiensis*, Hartl., in that island. It is not uncommon in the forest, roaming about in search of the insects on which it feeds. I never saw it on the ground; but I once shot it climbing up the trunk of a tree, and clinging to the bark, pecking like a Woodpecker at a decaying rotten limb. It is a thorough mocking-bird. The sexes do not differ. The edges of the basal portion of the upper, and on the major part of lower mandible, are yellow, as is the inside of the bill and throat. This species affords another instance of variation as in *Platycercus*.

The Ovalau bird, *Myiolestes vitiensis*, Hartl., is much smaller and lighter-coloured, and has always the tip of the tail almost white; but I have a specimen from Bua, in Vanua Levu, which seems intermediate. It is smaller than my *M. macrorhynchus*, paler, and with a well developed red-brown tip to its tail. But I have a still more interesting bird from Fortuna Island, outside this group, 350 miles to the N.E. It is smaller than the Bua bird, and more like *M. vitiensis*; but the throat, chin, and breast are grey; the tails, though damaged, are evidently broadly tipped with white. I propose to separate the varieties, or species, as follows:—*M. vitiensis*, Hartl. (the type species); *M. buensis*, sp. nov.; *M. macrorhynchus* and *M. fortuna*, sp. nov. Unfortunately I have not a specimen of *M. vitiensis* at hand; but I add the measurements as given in the 'Ornithologie der Viti-, Samoa- and Tonga-Inseln' of Drs. Finsch and Hartlaub, wherein it is badly figured, the white of the tail-tip and the red of the vent being too prononcé. The measurements of the four species are as follows:—

	Long.		Al.		Caud.		Tars.	Rost.
	in. lin.		in. lin.		in. lin.		lin.	lin.
<i>M. vitiensis</i>	6	6	3	1	2	8	$8\frac{2}{3}$	$7\frac{1}{2}$
<i>M. buensis</i>	6	6	3	3	3	4	11	13
<i>M. fortunæ</i>	6	6	3	1	3	3	11	9
<i>M. macrorhynchus</i>	7	6	3	4	3	9	13	14

As will be seen, the bills of *M. buensis* and *M. macrorhynchus* much exceed the others in length, and are nearly twice as thick.

PACHYCEPHALA TORQUATA, sp. nov.

This, another new species, is not uncommon in the forests of Taviuni—perhaps on account of its loud and varied voice betraying it oftener than that of other birds. If you listen attentively, you will probably hear a kind of running bass accompaniment of “purr purr.” This comes from its mate, a little brown bird. The family are like the female, the very young ones being redder. As the young males grow up, the glorious yellow livery in which the adult rejoices is put on in patches, generally beginning with a yellow moustache on each side of the mouth.

And now for a further inquiry into species or varieties. What are the four birds we have here?—1. *Pachycephala gröffi*, Hartl.; 2. *P. vitiensis*, Gray; 3. *P. icteroides*, Peale; 4. *P. torquata*, Layard. Are they species or varieties?

As far as I know, my *P. torquata* is confined exclusively to Taviuni. The yellow of the underparts is extremely rich, and crossed by a broad black collar; the voice differs from all the others. *P. vitiensis* is much paler, and the throat paler still (Finsch and Hartlaub say “white;” but I have not seen it so), and separated from the other yellow by a narrow black collar. It is found in Viti Levu, not elsewhere that I know of yet. *P. icteroides* has no collar, and is paler than either of the two last. I fancy some specimens look as if they were assuming collars, a few black spots appearing on the neck. It is found in Ovalau. *P. gröffi* has a yellow spot on each side of the forehead, beginning at the nostrils, and a yellow bar on the rump. Its underparts equal those of *P. torquata* in richness. It is found at Bua (Vanua Levu).

My son said he saw a *Pachycephala* on the Rewa which was much lighter than *P. torquata*; probably it was *P. icteroides*, as he did not see any collar. He was so close to it that he refrained from firing, lest he should blow it to pieces. A native brought him a wonderful egg and nest; and on questioning him as to the parentage, he took him into the garden, and, pointing to a bright yellow flower, said the body was like that. We have no other bird of this colour; so I shall describe these eggs provisionally as those of this species.

The nest is a loose structure of rootless fine twigs, stems of a fern, dried ferns, and leaves; about 6 inches across by 4 deep; diameter of cup about 3 inches.

The egg is of a coffee-colour, lightest at the small end, darkest at the obtuse end, near which is a broad band of black. Axis 14^{'''}, diam. 9^{'''}. Surface polished.

APLONIS TABUENSIS, Gmel.

We did not find this species at Ngila, but in the forest at the back of "Na Mala," a second plantation belonging to Mr. Mason, some ten or eleven miles further south. It was feeding in flocks in a forest-tree bearing large black berries in clusters. It is not uncommon near Levuka; and I introduce its name here chiefly to notice another instance of variation.

I have two birds from the island of Fortuna, similar in every measurement to the Fiji species, except that the bill is *stouter* every way, but not longer; and the whole bird is imbued with a black shade. The sheen of the Fijian *A. tabuensis* is coppery, especially about the head; that of the other is of iron. I propose to call it *APLONIS FORTUNÆ*, sp. nov.

PTILOTIS PROCERIOR, F. & H.,

is unknown in Taviuni; and its place is supplied by a species that I at first took for *P. carunculata*, Gmel. But the more I look at it, the more I doubt its identity with that bird; without actual comparison, however, with specimens from Tonga, which is, I believe, the real habitat of *P. carunculata*, I cannot quite decide the point. Measurements go for little in this species, hardly two individuals agreeing together; but not

a single specimen we procured has the bill as short as 8''' , the maximum quoted by Drs. Finsch and Hartlaub. Then, again, they describe the iris as "white," and so figure it; in ours they are all buff, a darker shade prevailing. The wattle is very different from that of *P. procerior*, but hardly resembles that figured by Drs. Finsch and Hartlaub. If found distinct on actual comparison, I would name it *P. similis*. I would call it after the island, of the birds of which I now write; but I possess some specimens from Bua and Mathuata islands which are identical.

I shall have more to say on the identity of some of the birds of this coast with Taviuni presently; meanwhile I must refer to a species of *Ptilotis* from Fortuna Island, which is clearly quite distinct; but being one of Mr. Liardet's bad skins, is hard to describe.

It does not seem to have a pendent wattle, but a thickened, bare, fleshy, elongated yellow spot, between which and the bill is a black patch of feathers, and behind it, over the ears, a spot of bright yellow feathers. Its whole coloration is lighter than *P. procerior* and *P. similis*, especially on the chest and belly, which are rather brightly tinged with yellow; and it has nowhere that "scaled" appearance which, I find, in certain lights is exhibited by all the other species. In form it seems more slender. Length about 6'' 6 or 7''' , wing 3'' 9''' , tail 3'' 3''' , tarsi 1'' 1''' , bill 1'' . If new, I propose for this species the name of *PTILOTIS FLAVO-AURITA*.

LAMPROLIA VICTORIÆ, Finsch.

One of my chief objects in proceeding to Taviuni was to see this singular and beautiful species in its native haunts. It frequents the higher ranges of the mountains, never by any chance coming down to the sea-level. It is, as far as my present knowledge goes, confined to the island of Taviuni—though a gentleman, on whose observations I do not place much confidence, has assured my son that he has seen it on the neighbouring islands of Vanua Levu. A lad also told me, both it and the "Orange Dove" (*C. victor*) inhabit the Jasawas group of islands. It is never seen together in greater numbers

than three—a family party, father, mother, and chick; for, strange to say, *the female never lays more than one egg*. We found so many nests with solitary nestlings, and saw so many family parties, that there can be no doubt of the fact, which, so far as I can call to mind, is unique among the Insesores. We were a month or three weeks too late for their eggs, and too early for the second hatch, which I suspect they have, as the forest was full of young birds. The nests had chiefly fully fledged young ones; and only one had a single fresh egg; off this last I shot the female. This nest was built at the forked extremity of a thin horizontal twig, about four feet from the ground (none that we saw were out of reach of our hands), composed of fibres and the macerated strands of a species of flag, and lined with feathers, among which I detected the brilliant yellow breast-plumes of *Pachycephala torquata* (to which they seemed partial) and those of *Carpophaga latrans*. The structure, though light, is tolerably thick; diam. 3" 9" outside, 1" 9" inside; depth 2" 9". The eggs have a pale pink ground, generally coloured with dark pink spots of various sizes, the colour of which seems to have run at the edges. Another egg was almost white, with minute pink freckles; but it was addled, and, I think, a season old, and consequently bleached. Axis (of the good egg) 1", diam. 9".

In habits *Lamprolia victoriæ* shows considerable affinity to *Thamnobia* in its jerky motions, mode of flight, clambering up the thick (or thin) lianas, drooping its wings and elevating its tail. My son saw one clinging upright to a tree and digging into an ants' nest; one had its mouth full of white ants, destined probably for its young. It has a variety of cries, but no song (that we heard); it chattered defiance at us if near its nest, and was not at all shy. At other times it uttered a stridulous cry. The mouth of the young bird is bright yellow inside. When flying through the forest its course is pretty straight and swift, not jerky or undulating; it rarely, if ever, ascends trees of any altitude, always keeping to the undergrowth.

RHIPIDURA ALBICOLLIS, Layard.

This pretty little "Fan-tail" is rather abundant in Taviuni.

It was breeding during our visit; and we found several nests, but mostly with young ones. The structure is always placed in the fork of a perpendicular twig, composed of very fine fibrous material and the hairs of the young shoots of tree-ferns densely felted together. The interior of the nest is lined with coarser fibre. They all end in a long tail running down the perpendicular twig to which they are attached, though at the same time they are supported by a lateral twig running through their substance. Diam. outside 2" 9"', inside 1" 9"'; depth inside 1" 9"', from tip to end of tail 5" or 6"; but I saw one fully 9". The eggs are white, with various-sized brown-pink spots, rather inclining to form a ring at the greatest diameter, which is 7"', axis $8\frac{1}{2}$ ". This species is generally distributed, and, from its bold manner and loud cries of defiance, sure to attract notice. It follows the intruder on its haunts, chattering, scolding, spreading its fan-shaped tail, drooping its rounded wings, and, in fact, menacing its supposed foe till he has passed beyond its domain.

MYIAGRA AZUREOCAPILLA, Layard, Ibis, 1875, p. 434.

This lively bird was another of my attractions to Taviuni; and we devoted many hours of special hunting for them. They haunt the densest forest, and are partial to "cane-brakes" and tangles of lianas. My son, who procured the majority of our specimens, says he rarely found them except in pairs, and that the love-making of the male was very curious: standing on his tip toes, he elevated his lovely azure crest and uttered shrill cries to his more sombre-coloured mate. On Leopold shooting a female that cried out on being captured, the male fairly attacked him, and would not leave him, even for a sufficient distance to save his being blown to pieces by the discharge, for many minutes. We failed to find any nest, though (from the sexual development) they must have been breeding, or about to do so.

Mr. Tempest has sent me a young bird of this species from Bua. He says he thought it a non-breeding female; but the throat is a brighter chestnut-colour than others in my collection, and the head has a blue tinge. I think it a young male, and that in youth this sex resembles the female.

ERYTHRURA PEALEI, Hartl.

This exquisite little Finch, instead of being, like other members of his family, an inhabitant of the open country, feeding on grass-seeds, is a dweller in the dense forest, frequenting the high trees and living on berries, such as the Orange Dove eats. I am now quite certain that the Finch I saw at Nandraga and Naudi, on the coast of Viti Levu, living in flocks in the deserted fields, was not this species, but another, probably *Amadina optata*, F. & H. I distinctly saw the red rump; and the cry was quite that of *Amadina*, and distinct from that of *Erythrura*. The latter never goes in flocks; and we rarely saw them except singly.

MERULA VANICORENSIS, Quoy.

This bird, though not included in Finsch and Hartlaub's catalogue as a Fijian bird, has been sent me from Bua by Mr. Tempest, obtained, at an elevation of over 600 feet, at a place called Kandi.

CHRYSÆNA VICTOR, Gould.

This gorgeous Dove is the glory of the forest of Taviuni, and, I now find, is more generally distributed over a certain range of country than I suspected. It certainly is found in Lanthala and Rambi islands, and on Vanua Levu, about Bua, Ndreketti, &c.; and this, coupled with the discovery of the other species of birds already alluded to in this paper as residing there, seems to point to the fact that at no very distant date (geologically speaking) these islands were joined together, and not, as now, separated by the straits of Somo-Somo. Those of 'The Ibis' brotherhood who have shot the "Cock of the Rock," can readily picture to themselves the "flame" of the Orange Dove as he pursues some rival through the green forest—the eye fairly dazzled as the orange ball on golden wings turns and twists in the sunlight. Dull days do not suit him a bit, and he hides away and mopes, never uttering a sound; but with the bright sun he emerges from his retreat, and "clucks" to his green wife from many a "cool retreat." The young males never utter this sound, and would be mistaken for females, but that the vent is more orange. They

breed about December or November, making a rude platform of small twigs for a nest, not usually above 8 or 10 feet from the ground, and laying two eggs, pure white, axis 1" 4^{'''}, diam. 1".

People have told me they have taken the young birds orange-coloured from the nest, and seen orange females. I regret to say I don't believe them!

C. victor feeds on many sorts of small and large berries and fruits, swallowing them whole.

GALLUS DOMESTICUS.

Among other presents left by Capt. Cook when he visited these islands, were enumerated Fowls; and some of the earlier navigators who followed him mentioned the fact of their having taken to the bush and gone wild. They are now found roaming free on many of the islands; and it was no uncommon thing to be greeted by a loud "cock-a-doodle-doo" as we wound our early way along the narrow tracks of the forest. Some of these descendants of the old stock have gone back to the "Game-fowl" colours; others still show traces of the "Dunghill." The natives catch them in snares and springes; but we shot some and captured a chick, which, with its mother and a rooster, I hope may form a group in the British Museum as a product of our new colony of Fiji.

STREPSILAS INTERPRES (L.).

Our short visit to Koro Island procured us a specimen of this bird, a female, in fine spring plumage. It is very scarce in the colony, and does not, I think, breed with us.

XV.—*Notes on the Ornithology of Fiji, with Descriptions of new or little-known Species.* By E. L. LAYARD, C.M.G., F.Z.S., &c., H.B.M. Consul.

As there are several collectors of birds now in Fiji, who are transmitting specimens to Europe and Australia, I deem it advisable to forward descriptions of such novelties as fall under my own observation, as they occur, for publication in the pages of 'The Ibis.'